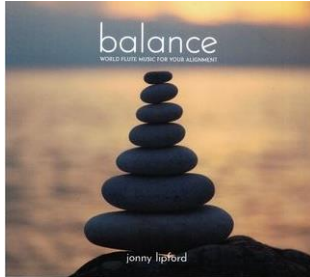


Jonny Lipford

Balance



On **Jonny Lipford**'s new album **Balance** the Native American flute is the main instrument. This nine track mystical amalgam combines Indigenous musicality and astonishing ambient elements along with a modest sense of Eastern philosophic impressions. Then again, it could be Western philosophies. The compositions are so well blended that the flavors of organic based music suggests a universal theme, that is, balance in spirit. Jonny Lipford is an award winning flutist known for successfully crossing over genre boundaries and arriving at a gratifying destination. He does this remarkably well on album number 25, *Balance*, a musical Western variation of the Chakras. All of the tracks with a few exceptions are more than eight minutes long or longer.

**Sun Salutation** in the opening track, but then all the subsequent tracks spell out the word "Balance" using their first letters. This delightful, muted piece that represents the Earth as she awakens can only be, for me, the modernization of *Edvard Grieg's Moring Mood* from his Peer Gynt Suite. Lipford conducts the sunrise like an earthly maestro waving in light and heat at just the right moments. I anticipate, through this melding of hang drum and flute, the blessing of energy that I am about to receive. It is the dawn.

Time slows down to a remarkable pace in the Lipford's tune **Affirming Your Desire**. It is just as important to recognize your own gifts as it is to do it for others. There is something inside you that makes you a special you. Identify that. Reinforce it. And use that gift. The music flows serenely, like water over pebbles, yet the force is not enough to move the pebbles. Join in the flow of flute, piano, and gentle drone.

Like paper over rock, dramatic piano softly blankets the pacific flute on **Clarifying Your Vision**. Jonny's tune aids in focus, determination, and finally, the outcome. When you focus your thoughts and emotions, the results are visible, tangible, and more importantly, achievable. This cut is more than ten minutes long and very easy to get lost in. It's time to surrender.

**Awakening Your Heart** is a solemn tune, but not sad. It is attuning your heart and your love to others as well as to yourself. That who gives love gets love in return. Native drum acts as a heartbeat, while Lipford's flute flows like life giving energy through the spirit.

A little light percussion, just enough to give it a moderate tempo, a droning background, and a trilling flute all deftly merge on the tune **Enlightening Your Spirit**. Lipford creates an introspective atmosphere, an experience really, where the mind can freely open and the spirit can attain its best. You become aware and the unknown universe becomes your partner in all.

The last tune on *Balance* completes the circle. **Moon Salutation**, Jonny's melody of slow, sweet flute acknowledges an ebony sky and a bright silver moon that give balance, judgement, and

quietude. The cycle renews. Bansuri flute, a melodic subliminal bridge of West to East, allows the spirit to exist in both worlds.

I liked every song on Balance. One track flowed effortlessly into the next and it was an easy task to just let the music play on and repeat itself. Jonny Lipford's album is one where you do go with the flow and at times you are not aware of it. It is peaceful, calming, and expansive as if the world had no boundaries. Highly listenable.

- R J Lannan, Artisan Music Reviews